

RR 5313
B 7
1888

FOLIO



THE
BRIDAL
OF
TRIERMAIN

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT

ILLUSTRATED
BY









PLATE I.

no. 18-2-13

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

WITH FOURTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

PERCY MACQUOID R.I.

BOSTON

LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS

10 MILK STREET NEXT THE OLD SOUTH MEETING-HOUSE


NEW YORK CHARLES T. DILLINGHAM

1888



List of Illustrations.

<p>PLATE I. <i>Frontispiece.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">"What time or where Did she pass, that maid with her heavenly brow."—<i>Page 5.</i></p> <p>PLATE II. 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"And, from beneath his glove of mail, Scann'd at his ease the lovely vale."—<i>Page 10.</i></p> <p>PLATE III. 11</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"The ivory bugle's golden tip Twice touch'd the Monarch's manly lip."—<i>Page 13.</i></p> <p>PLATE IV. 17</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Thus, week by week, and day by day, His life inglorious glides away."—<i>Page 19.</i></p> <p>PLATE V. 21</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Confessing, by his downcast eye, The wrong he sought to justify."—<i>Page 20.</i></p> <p>PLATE VI. 25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Screaming with agony and fright, He bolted twenty feet upright."—<i>Page 23.</i></p> <p>PLATE VII. 29</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Her sandall'd feet, her ankles bare, And the eagle-plume that deck'd her hair."—<i>Page 27.</i></p>	<p>PLATE VIII. 33</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Sternly the wizard prophet eyed The dreary lists with slaughter dyed."—<i>Page 35.</i></p> <p>PLATE IX. 41</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Backward his stately form he drew, And at the rocks the weapon threw."—<i>Page 43.</i></p> <p>PLATE X. 45</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Roland De Vaux upon the brim Of the broad moat stood prompt to swim."—<i>Page 47.</i></p> <p>PLATE XI. 49</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"On high each wayward Maiden threw Her swarthy arm, with wild halloo!"—<i>Page 51.</i></p> <p>PLATE XII. 53</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Gentle Maidens, rise, I pray! Bar not thus my destined way."—<i>Page 55.</i></p> <p>PLATE XIII. 57</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Gently, lo! the Warrior kneels, Soft that lovely hand he steals."—<i>Page 64.</i></p> <p>PLATE XIV. 61</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Safe and free from magic power, Blushing like the rose's flower."—<i>Page 64.</i></p>
--	---



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

<https://archive.org/details/bridaloftrierman00scot>

Canto First.

I.

WHERE is the Maiden of mortal strain,
That may match with the Baron of Triermain?
She must be lovely, and constant, and kind,
Holy and pure, and humble of mind,
Blithe of cheer, and gentle of mood,
Courteous, and generous, and noble of blood —
Lovely as the sun's first ray,
When it breaks the clouds of an April day;
Constant and true as the widow'd dove,
Kind as a minstrel that sings of love;
Pure as the fountain in rocky cave,
Where never sunbeam kiss'd the wave;
Humble as maiden that loves in vain,
Holy as hermit's vesper strain;
Gentle as breeze that but whispers and dies,
Yet blithe as the light leaves that dance in its sighs;
Courteous as monarch the morn he is crown'd,
Generous as spring-dews that bless the glad ground;
Noble her blood as the currents that met
In the veins of the noblest Plantagenet —
Such must her form be, her mood, and her strain,
That shall match with Sir Roland of Triermain.

II.

Sir Roland de Vaux he hath laid him to sleep,
His blood it was fever'd, his breathing was deep.

He had been pricking against the Scot,
The foray was long, and the skirmish hot;
His dinted helm and his buckler's plight
Bore token of a stubborn fight.

All in the castle must hold them still,
Harpers must lull him to his rest,
With the slow soft tunes he loves the best,
Till sleep sink down upon his breast,
Like the dew on a summer hill.

III.

It was the dawn of an autumn day;
The sun was struggling with frost-fog gray,
That like a silvery crape was spread
Round Skiddaw's dim and distant head,
And faintly gleam'd each painted pane
Of the lordly halls of Triermain,
When that Baron bold awoke.
Starting he woke, and loudly did call,
Rousing his menials in bower and hall,
While hastily he spoke:

IV.

"Hearken, my minstrels! Which of ye all
Touch'd his harp with that dying fall,
So sweet, so soft, so faint,
It seem'd an angel's whisper'd call
To an expiring saint?
And hearken, my merry-men! What time or where
Did she pass, that maid with her heavenly brow,

With her look so sweet and her eyes so fair,
And her graceful step and her angel air,
And the eagle plume in her dark-brown hair,
That pass'd from my bower e'en now?"

V.

Answer'd him Richard de Brettville; he
Was chief of the Baron's minstrelsy —
" Silent, noble chieftain, we
Have sat since midnight close,
When such lulling sounds as the brooklet sings,
Murmur'd from our melting strings,
And hush'd you to repose.
Had a harp-note sounded here,
It had caught my watchful ear,
Although it fell as faint and shy
As bashful maiden's half-form'd sigh,
When she thinks her lover near." —
Answered Philip of Fastwaite tall,
He kept guard in the outer hall, —
" Since at eve our watch took post,
Not a foot has thy portal cross'd ;
Else had I heard the steps, though low
And light they fell, as when earth receives,
In morn of frost, the wither'd leaves,
That drop when no winds blow." —

VI.

" Then come thou hither, Henry, my page,
Whom I saved from the sack of Hermitage,

When that dark castle, tower, and spire,
Rose to the skies a pile of fire,
And redden'd all the Nine-stane Hill,
And the shrieks of death, that wildly broke
Through devouring flame and smothering smoke,
Made the warrior's heart-blood chill!
The trustiest thou of all my train,
My fleetest courser thou must rein,
And ride to Lyulph's tower,
And from the Baron of Triermain
Greet well that Sage of power.
He is sprung from Druid sires,
And British bards that tuned their lyres
To Arthur's and Pendragon's praise,
And his who sleeps at Dunmailraise.
Gifted like his gifted race,
He the characters can trace,
Graven deep in elder time
Upon Helvellyn's cliffs sublime ;
Sign and sigil well doth he know,
And can bode of weal and woe,
Of kingdoms' fall, and fate of wars,
From mystic dreams and course of stars.
He shall tell me if middle earth
To that enchanting shape gave birth,
Or if 'twas but an airy thing,
Such as fantastic slumbers bring,
Fram'd from the rainbow's varying dyes,
Or fading tints of western skies.
For, by the blessed rood I swear,
If that fair form breathe vital air,
No other maiden by my side
Shall ever rest De Vaux's bride!"





VII.

The faithful Page he mounts his steed,
 And soon he cross'd green Irthing's mead,
 Dash'd o'er Kirkoswald's verdant plain,
 And Eden barr'd his course in vain.
 He pass'd red Penrith's Table Round,
 For feats of chivalry renown'd,
 Left Mayburgh's mound and stones of power,
 By Druids raised in magic hour,
 And traced the Eamont's winding way,
 Till Ulfo's lake beneath him lay.

VIII.

Onward he rode, the pathway still
 Winding betwixt the lake and hill;
 Till on the fragment of a rock,
 Struck from its base by lightning shock,
 He saw the hoary Sage:
 The silver moss and lichen twined,
 With fern and deer-hair check'd and lined,
 A cushion fit for age:
 And o'er him shook the aspen-tree,
 A restless, rustling canopy.
 Then sprung young Henry from his selle,
 And greeted Lyulph grave,
 And then his master's tale did tell,
 And then for counsel crave.
 The Man of Years mused long and deep,
 Of time's lost treasures taking keep,
 And then, as rousing from a sleep,
 His solemn answer gave.

IX.

"That maid is born of middle earth,
 And may of man be won,
 Though there have glided since her birth
 Five hundred years and one.
 But where's the knight in all the north
 That dare the adventure follow forth,
 So perilous to knightly worth,
 In the Valley of St. John?
 Listen, youth, to what I tell,
 And bind it on thy memory well;
 Nor muse that I commence the rhyme
 Far distant 'mid the wrecks of time.
 The mystic tale, by bard and sage,
 Is handed down from Merlin's age.

X.

Lyulph's Tale.

"KING ARTHUR has ridden from merry Carlisle,
 When Pentecost was o'er:
 He journey'd like errant-knight the while,
 And sweetly the summer sun did smile
 On mountain, moss, and moor.
 Above his solitary track
 Rose Glaramara's ridgy back,
 Amid whose yawning gulfs the sun
 Cast umber'd radiance red and dun,
 Though never sunbeam could discern
 The surface of that sable tarn,
 In whose black mirror you may spy
 The stars, while noontide lights the sky.

The gallant King he skirted still
The margin of that mighty hill ;
Rock upon rocks incumbent hung,
And torrents, down the gullies flung,
Join'd the rude river that brawl'd on,
Recoiling now from crag and stone,
Now diving deep from human ken,
And raving down its darksome glen.
The Monarch judg'd this desert wild,
With such romantic ruin piled,
Was theatre by Nature's hand
For feat of high achievement plann'd.

XI.

" O rather he chose, that Monarch bold,
On vent'rous quest to ride,
In plate and mail, by wood and wold,
Than, with ermine trapp'd and cloth of gold,
In princely bower to bide ;
The bursting crash of a foeman's spear,
As it shiver'd against his mail,
Was merrier music to his ear
Than courtier's whisper'd tale ;
And the clash of Caliburn more dear,
When on the hostile casque it rung,
Than all the lays
To their monarch's praise
That the harpers of Reged sung.
He loved better to rest by wood or river,
Than in bower of his bride, Dame Guenever,
For he left that lady so lovely of cheer,
To follow adventures of danger and fear ;

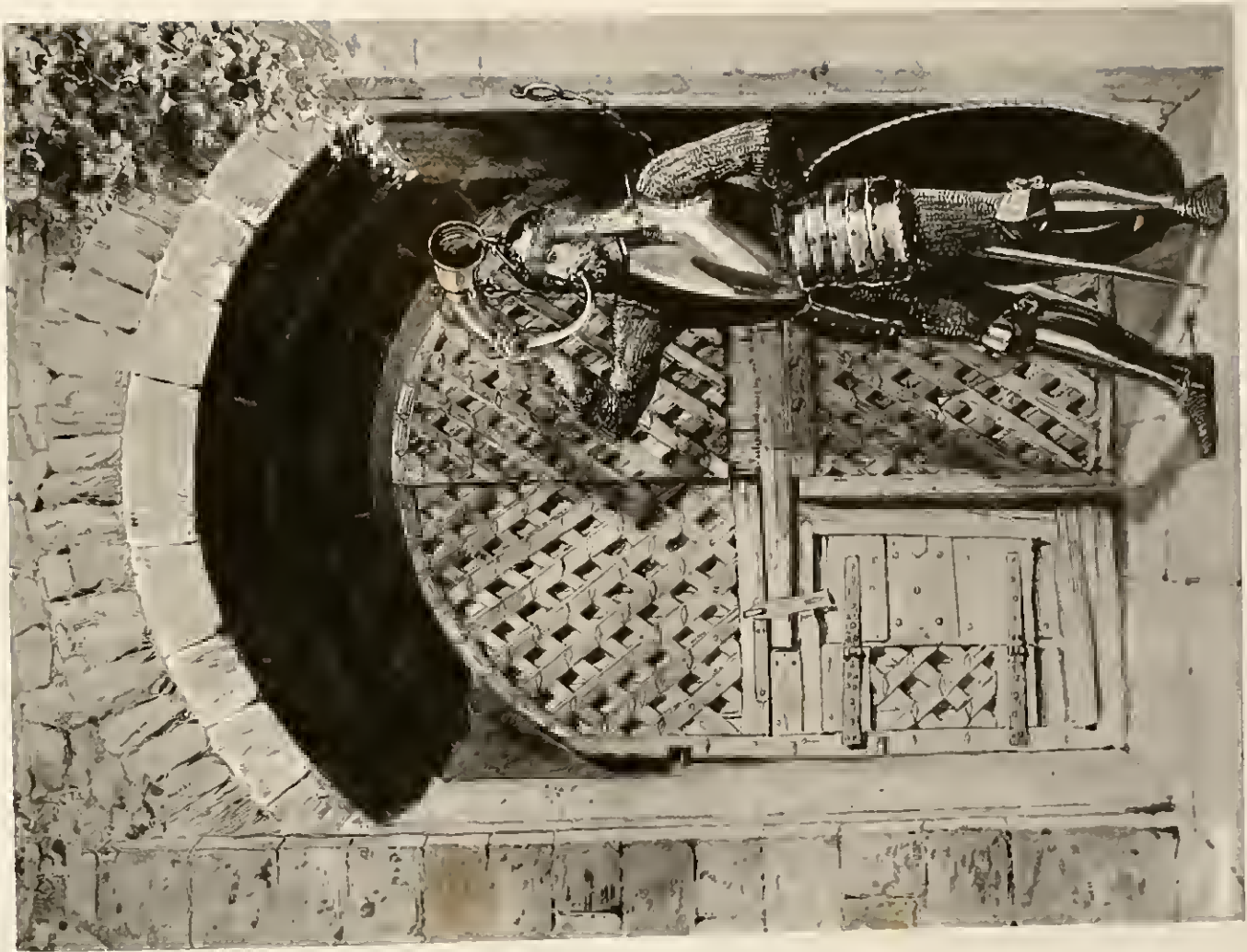
And the frank-hearted Monarch full little did wot
That she smiled, in his absence, on brave Lancelot.

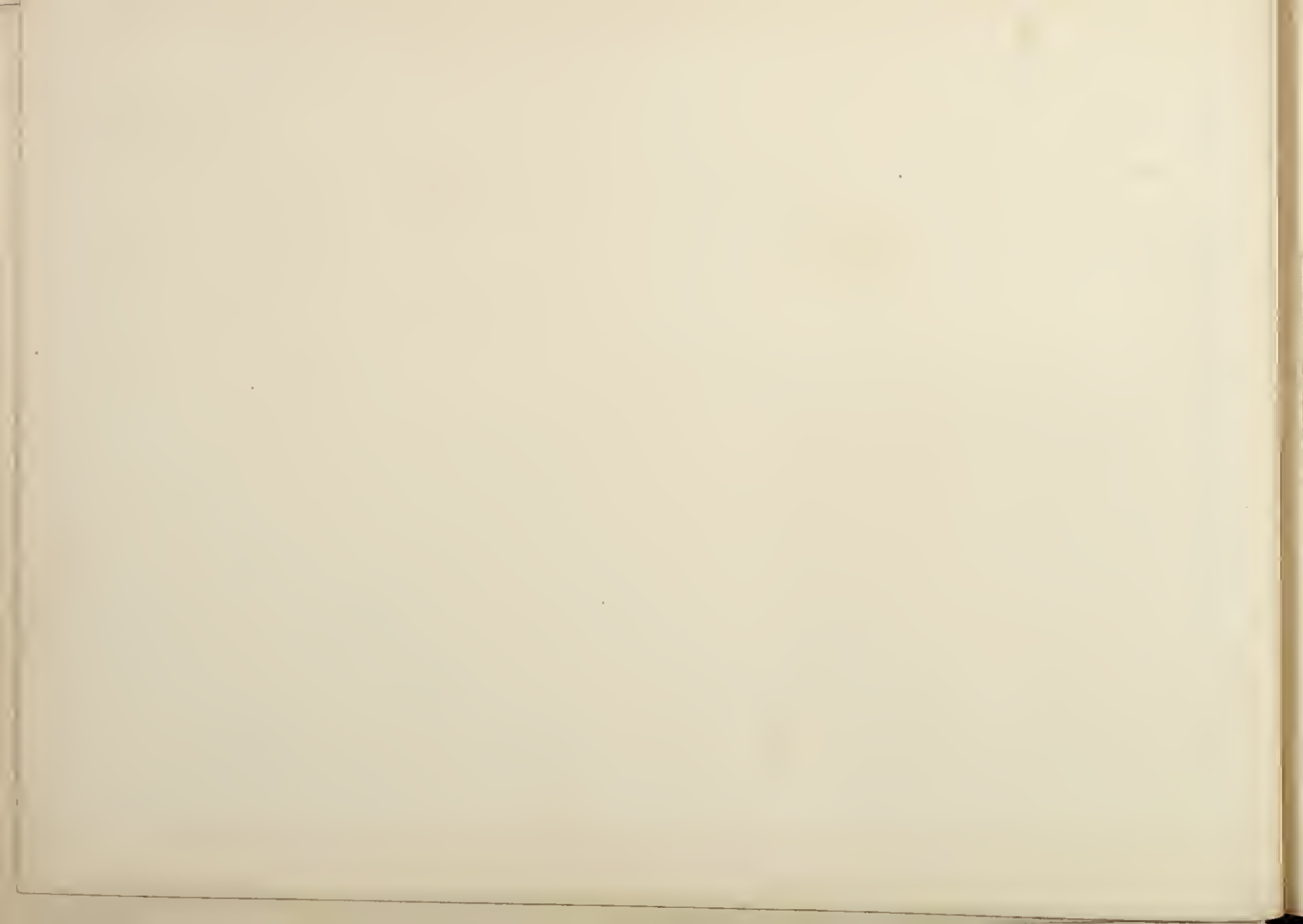
XII.

" He rode, till over down and dell
The shade more broad and deeper fell ;
And though around the mountain's head
Flow'd streams of purple, gold, and red,
Dark at the base, unblest by beam,
Frown'd the black rocks, and roar'd the stream.
With toil the King his way pursued
By lonely Threlkeld's waste and wood,
Till on his course obliquely shone
The narrow Valley of SAINT JOHN,
Down sloping to the western sky,
Where lingering sunbeams love to lie.
Right glad to feel those beams again,
The King drew up his charger's rein ;
With gauntlet raised he screen'd his sight,
As dazzled with the level light,
And, from beneath his glove of mail,
Scann'd at his ease the lovely vale.
While 'gainst the sun his armor bright
Gleam'd ruddy like the beacon's light.

XIII.

" Paled in by many a lofty hill,
The narrow dale lay smooth and still,
And, down its verdant bosom led,
A winding brooklet found its bed.





But, midmost of the vale, a mound
 Arose, with airy turrets crown'd,
 Buttress, and rampire's circling bound,
 And mighty keep and tower ;
 Seem'd some primeval giant's hand
 The castle's massive walls had plann'd,
 And ponderous bulwark to withstand
 Ambitious Nimrod's power.
 Above the moated entrance slung,
 The balanced drawbridge trembling hung,
 As jealous of a foe ;
 Wicket of oak, as iron hard,
 With iron studded, clenched, and barred,
 And prong'd portcullis, join'd to guard
 The gloomy pass below.
 But the gray walls no banners crown'd,
 Upon the watch-tower's airy round
 No warder stood his horn to sound,
 No guard beside the bridge was found,
 And, where the Gothic gateway frown'd,
 Glanced neither bill nor bow.

XIV.

" Beneath the castle's gloomy pride,
 In ample round did Arthur ride
 Three times ; nor living thing he spied,
 Nor heard a living sound,
 Save that, awakening from her dream,
 The owl now began to scream,
 In concert with the rushing stream,
 That wash'd the battle mound.

He lighted from his goodly steed,
 And he left him to graze on bank and mead ;
 And slowly he climb'd the narrow way,
 That reached the entrance grim and gray,
 And he stood the outward arch below,
 And his bugle-horn prepared to blow,
 In summons blithe and bold,
 Deeming to rouse from iron sleep
 The guardian of this dismal Keep,
 Which well he guess'd the hold
 Of wizard stern, or goblin grim,
 Or pagan of gigantic limb,
 The tyrant of the wold.

XV.

" The ivory bugle's golden tip
 Twice touch'd the Monarch's manly lip,
 And twice his hand withdrew.
 — Think not but Arthur's heart was good !
 His shield was cross'd by the blessed rood,
 Had a pagan host before him stood,
 He had charged them through and through ;
 Yet the silence of that ancient place
 Sunk on his heart, and he paused a space
 Ere yet his horn he blew.
 But, instant as its 'larum rung,
 The castle gate was open flung,
 Portcullis rose with crashing groan
 Full harshly up its groove of stone :
 The balance-beams obey'd the blast,
 And down the trembling drawbridge cast.

The vaulted arch before him lay,
With nought to bar the gloomy way,
And onward Arthur paced, with hand
On Caliburn's resistless brand.

XVI.

" A hundred torches, flashing bright,
Dispell'd at once the gloomy night
That lur'd along the walls,
And show'd the King's astonish'd sight
The inmates of the halls.
Nor wizard stern, nor goblin grim,
Nor giant huge of form and limb,
Nor heathen knight, was there ;
But the cressets, which odors flung aloft,
Show'd, by their yellow light and soft,
A band of damsels fair.
Onward they came, like summer wave
That dances to the shore :
A hundred voices welcome gave,
And welcome o'er and o'er !
A hundred lovely hands assail
The bucklers of the Monarch's mail,
And busy labor'd to unhasp
Rivet of steel and iron clasp ;
One wrapp'd him in a mantle fair,
And one flung odors on his hair ;
His short curl'd ringlets one smooth'd down,
One wreathed them with a myrtle crown.
A bride upon her wedding day
Was tended ne'er by troop so gay.

XVII.

" Loud laugh'd they all, — the King, in vain,
With questions task'd the giddy train ;
Let him entreat, or crave, or call,
'Twas one reply, — loud laugh'd they all.
Then o'er him mimic chains they fling,
Framed of the fairest flowers of spring.
While some their gentle force unite,
Onward to drag the wondering knight,
Some, bolder, urge his pace, with blows,
Dealt with the lily or the rose.
Behind him were in triumph borne
The warlike arms he late had worn.
Four of the train combined to rear
The terrors of Tintadgel's spear ;
Two, laughing at their lack of strength,
Dragged Caliburn in cumbrous length ;
One, while she aped a martial stride,
Placed on her brows the helmet's pride,
Then scream'd, 'twixt laughter and surprise,
To feel its depth o'erwhelm her eyes.
With revel-shout, and triumph-song,
Thus gayly march'd the giddy throng.

XVIII.

" Through many a gallery and hall
They led, I ween, their royal thrall.
At length, beneath a fair arcade
Their march and song at once they stay'd.
The eldest maiden of the band,
(The lovely maid was scarce eighteen,)

Raised, with imposing air, her hand,
And reverent silence did command,
 On entrance of their Queen,
And they were mute. — But as a glance
They steal on Arthur's countenance
 Bewilder'd with surprise,
Their smother'd mirth again 'gan speak,
In archly dimpled chin and cheek,
 And laughter-lighted eyes.

XIX.

“ The attributes of these high days
Now only live in minstrel-lays ;
For Nature, now exhausted, still
Was then profuse of good and ill.
Strength was gigantic, valor high,
And wisdom soar'd beyond the sky,
And beauty had such matchless beam,
As lights not now a lover's dream.
Yet, e'en in that romantic age,
 Ne'er were such charms by mortal seen
As Arthur's dazzled eyes engage,
When forth on that enchanted stage,
With glittering train of maid and page,
 Advanced the castle's Queen !
While up the hall she slowly pass'd,
Her dark eye on the King she cast,
 That flash'd expression strong ;
The longer dwelt that lingering look,
Her cheek the livelier color took,

And scarce the shamed-faced King could brook
 The gaze that lasted long.
A sage, who had that look espied,
Where kindling passion strove with pride,
 Had whisper'd, ' Prince, beware !
From the chafed tiger rend the prey,
Rush on the lion when at bay,
Bar the fell dragon's blighted way,
 But shun that lovely snare !' —

XX

“ At once, that inward strife suppress'd,
The dame approach'd her warlike guest,
With greeting in that fair degree,
Where female pride and courtesy
Are blended with such passing art
As awes at once and charms the heart.
A courtly welcome first she gave,
Then of his goodness 'gan to crave
 Construction fair and true
Of her light maidens' idle mirth,
Who drew from lonely glens their birth,
Nor knew to pay to stranger worth
 And dignity their due ;
And then she pray'd that he would rest
That night her castle's honored guest.
The Monarch meetly thanks express'd ;
The banquet rose at her behest.
With lay and tale, and laugh and jest,
 Apace the evening flew.

" The lady sate the Monarch by,
 Now in her turn abash'd and shy,
 And with indifference seem'd to hear
 The toys he whisper'd in her ear.
 Her bearing modest was and fair,
 Yet shadows of constraint were there,
 That showed an over-cautious care
 Some inward thought to hide ;
 Oft did she pause in full reply,
 And oft cast down her large dark eye,
 Oft check'd the soft voluptuous sigh,
 That heav'd her bosom's pride.
 Slight symptoms these, but shepherds know
 How hot the mid-day sun shall glow
 From the mist of morning sky ;
 And so the wily Monarch guess'd,
 That this assumed restraint express'd
 More ardent passions in the breast,
 Than ventured to the eye.
 Closer he press'd, while beakers rang,
 While maidens laugh'd and minstrels sang,
 Still closer to her ear —
 But why pursue the common tale ?
 Or wherefore show how knights prevail
 When ladies dare to hear ?
 Or wherefore trace, from what slight cause
 Its source one tyrant passion draws,
 Till, mastering all within,
 Where lives the man that has not tried,
 How mirth can into folly glide,
 And folly into sin ?"

Canto Second.

I.

Lyulph's Tale Continued.

" **A**NOTHER day, another day,
 And yet another, glides away !
 The Saxon stern, the pagan Dane,
 Maraud on Britain's shores again.
 Arthur, of Christendom the flower,
 Lies loitering in a lady's bower
 The horn, that foemen wont to fear,
 Sounds but to wake the Cumbrian deer,
 And Caliburn, the British pride,
 Hangs useless by a lover's side.

II.

" Another day, another day,
 And yet another, glides away !
 Heroic plans in pleasure drown'd,
 He thinks not of the Table Round ;
 In lawless love dissolved his life,
 He thinks not of his beauteous wife ;
 Better he loves to snatch a flower
 From bosom of his paramour,
 Than from a Saxon knight to wrest
 The honors of his heathen crest ;
 Better to wreathe, 'mid tresses brown,
 The heron's plume her hawk struck down,
 Than o'er the altar give to flow,
 The banners of a Paynim foe.



PLATE IV

Thus, week by week, and day by day,
His life inglorious glides away ;
But she, that soothes his dream, with fear
Beholds his hour of waking near.

III.

“ Much force have mortal charms to stay
Our pace in Virtue's toilsome way ;
But Guendolen's might far outshine
Each maid of merely mortal line.
Her mother was of human birth,
Her sire a Genie of the earth,
In days of old deem'd to preside
O'er lovers' wiles and beauty's pride,
By youths and virgins worshipp'd long,
With festive dance and choral song,
Till, when the cross to Britain came,
On heathen altars died the flame.
Now, deep in Wastdale's solitude,
The downfall of his rights he rued,
And, born of his resentment heir,
He train'd to guile that lady fair,
To sink in slothful sin and shame
The champions of the Christian name.
Well skill'd to keep vain thoughts alive,
And all to promise, nought to give,
The timid youth had hope in store,
The bold and pressing gain'd no more.
As wildered children leave their home,
After the rainbow's arch to roam,
Her lovers barter'd fair esteem,
Faith, fame, and honor, for a dream.

IV.

“ Her sire's soft arts the soul to tame
She practis'd thus — till Arthur came ;
Then, frail humanity had part,
And all the mother claim'd her heart.
Forgot each rule her father gave,
Sunk from a princess to a slave,
Too late must Guendolen deplore,
He, that has all, can hope no more !
Now must she see her lover strain,
At every turn, her feeble chain ;
Watch, to new-bind each knot, and shrink
To view each fast-decaying link.
Art she invokes to Nature's aid,
Her vest to zone, her locks to braid ;
Each varied pleasure heard her call,
The feast, the tourney, and the ball :
Her storied lore she next applies,
Taxing her mind, to aid her eyes ;
Now more than mortal wise, and then
In female softness sunk again ;
Now, raptur'd, with each wish complying,
With feign'd reluctance now denying ;
Each charm she varied, to retain
A varying heart — and all in vain !

V.

“ Thus in the garden's narrow bound,
Flank'd by some castle's Gothic round,
Fain would the artist's skill provide,
The limits of his realm to hide.

The walks in labyrinths he twines,
Shade after shade with skill combines,
With many a varied flowery knot,
And copse, and arbor, decks the spot,
Tempting the hasty foot to stay,
And linger on the lovely way —
Vain art! vain hope! 'tis fruitless all!
At length we reached the bounding wall,
And, sick of flower and trim-dressed tree,
Long for rough glades and forest free.

VI.

" Three summer months had scanty flown,
When Arthur, in embarrass'd tone,
Spoke of his liegemen and his throne ;
Said, all too long had been his stay,
And duties, which a monarch sway,
Duties, unknown to humbler men,
Must tear her knight from Guendolen. —
She listen'd silently the while,
Her mood express'd in bitter smile ;
Beneath her eye must Arthur quail,
And oft resume the unfinish'd tale,
Confessing, by his downcast eye,
The wrong he sought to justify.
He ceased. A moment mute she gazed,
And then her looks to heaven she raised ;
One palm her temples veil'd, to hide
The tear that sprung in spite of pride ;
The other for an instant press'd
The foldings of her silken vest !

VII.

" At her reproachful sign and look,
The hint the Monarch's conscience took,
Eager he spoke — ' No, lady, no !
Deem not of British Arthur so,
Nor think he can deserter prove
To the dear pledge of mutual love !
I swear by sceptre and by sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That, if a boy shall claim my care,
That boy is born a kingdom's heir ;
But, if a maiden Fate allows,
To choose that maid a fitting spouse,
A summer-day in lists shall strive
My knights, — the bravest knights alive, —
And he, the best and bravest tried,
Shall Arthur's daughter claim for bride.' —
He spoke, with voice resolved and high —
The lady deign'd him not reply.

VIII.

" At dawn of morn, ere on the brake,
His matins did a warbler make,
Or stir'd his wing to brush away
A single dew-drop from the spray,
Ere yet a sunbeam, through the mist,
The castle-battlements had kiss'd,
The gates revolve, the drawbridge falls,
And Arthur sallies from the walls.
Doff'd his soft garb of Persia's loom,
And steel from spur to helmet-plume,



PLATE V.

His Libyan steed full proudly trode,
And joyful neigh'd beneath his load.
The Monarch gave a passing sigh
To penitence and pleasures by,
When, lo! to his astonished ken
Appear'd the form of Guendolen.

IX.

" Beyond the outmost wall she stood,
Attired like huntress of the wood :
Sandall'd her feet, her ankles bare,
And eagle-plumage deck'd her hair :
Firm was her look, her bearing bold,
And in her hand a cup of gold.
' Thou goest ! ' she said, ' and ne'er again
Must we two meet, in joy or pain.
Full fain would I this hour delay,
Though weak the wish — yet, wilt thou stay ?
No ! thou look'st forward. Still attend, —
Part we like lover, and like friend.' —
She raised the cup — ' Not this the juice
The sluggish vines of earth produce ;
Pledge we, at parting, in the draught
Which Genii love ! ' — she said, and quaff'd ;
And strange unwonted lustres fly
From her flush'd cheek and sparkling eye.

X.

" The courteous Monarch bent him low,
And, stooping down from saddle-bow,
Lifted the cup, in act to drink.
A drop escaped the goblet's brink —

Intense as liquid fire from hell,
Upon the charger's neck it fell.
Screaming with agony and fright,
He bolted twenty feet upright —
— The peasant still can show the dint,
Where his hoofs lighted on the flint.
From Arthur's hand the goblet flew,
Scattering a shower of fiery dew,
That burn'd and blight'd where it fell !
The frantic steed rush'd up the dell,
As whistles from the bow the reed ;
Nor bit nor rein could check his speed
Until he gained the hill ;
Then breath and sinew failed apace,
And, reeling from the desperate race,
He stood, exhausted, still.
The Monarch, breathless and amazed,
Back on the fatal castle gazed —
Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,
Darkening against the morning sky :
But, on the spot where once they frown'd,
The lonely streamlet brawl'd around
A tufted knoll, where dimly shone
Fragments of rock and rifted stone.
Musing on this strange hap the while,
The King wends back to fair Carlisle ;
And cares, that cumber royal sway,
Wore memory of the past away.

XI.

" Full fifteen years, and more, were sped,
Each brought new wreaths for Arthur's head.

Twelve bloody fields, with glory fought,
 The Saxons to subjection brought;
 Rython, the mighty giant, slain
 By his good brand, relieved Bretagne;
 The Pictish Gillamore in fight,
 And Roman Lucius, own'd his might;
 And wide were through the world renown'd
 The glories of his Table Round.
 Each knight, who sought adventurous fame,
 To the bold court of Britain came,
 And all who suffer'd causeless wrong,
 From tyrant proud, or faitour strong,
 Sought Arthur's presence to complain,
 Nor there for aid implored in vain.

XII.

"For this the King, with pomp and pride,
 Held solemn court at Whitsuntide,
 And summon'd Prince and Peer,
 All who owed homage for their land,
 Or who craved knighthood from his hand,
 Or who had succor to demand,
 To come from far and near.
 At such high tide, were glee and game
 Mingled with feats of martial fame,
 For many a stranger champion came
 In lists to break a spear;
 And not a knight of Arthur's host,
 Save that he trode some foreign coast,
 But at this feast of Pentecost
 Before him must appear. —

Ah, Minstrels! when the Table Round
 Arose, with all its warriors crown'd,
 There was a theme for bards to sound
 In triumph to their string!
 Five hundred years are past and gone,
 But Time shall draw his dying groan,
 Ere he behold the British throne
 Begirt with such a ring!

XIII.

"The heralds named the appointed spot,
 As Caerleon or Camelot,
 Or Carlisle fair and free.
 At Penrith, now, the feast was set,
 And in fair Eamont's vale were met
 The flower of chivalry,
 There Galaad sat with manly grace,
 Yet maiden meekness in his face;
 There Morolt of the iron mace,
 And love-lorn Tristrem there;
 And Dinadam with lively glance,
 And Lanval with the fairy lance,
 And Mordred with his look askance,
 Brunor and Bevidere.
 Why should I tell of numbers more?
 Sir Cay, Sir Banier, and Sir Bore,
 Sir Carodac the keen,
 The gentle Gawain's courteous lore,
 Hector de Mares and Pellinore,
 And Lancelot, that evermore
 Look'd stolen-wise on the Queen.



PLATE VI.



XIV.

"When wine and mirth did most abound,
 And harpers play'd their blithest round,
 A shrilly trumpet shook the ground,
 And marshals clear'd the ring;
 A Maiden, on a palfrey white,
 Heading a band of damsels bright,
 Paced through the circle, to alight
 And kneel before the King.
 Arthur, with strong emotion, saw
 Her graceful boldness check'd by awe,
 Her dress like huntress of the wold,
 Her bow and baldric trapp'd with gold,
 Her sandall'd feet, her ankles bare,
 And the eagle-plume that deck'd her hair.
 Graceful her veil she backwards flung—
 The King, as from his seat he sprung,
 Almost cried 'Guendolen!'
 But 'twas a face more frank and wild,
 Betwixt the woman and the child,
 Where less of magic beauty smiled
 Than of the race of men;
 And in the forehead's haughty grace,
 The lines of Britain's royal race,
 Pendragon's you might ken.

XV.

"Faltering, yet gracefully, she said—
 'Great Prince! behold an orphan maid,

In her departed mother's name,
 A father's vow'd protection claim!
 The vow was sworn in desert lone,
 In the deep Valley of Saint John.'—
 At once the King the suppliant raised,
 And kiss'd her brow, her beauty praised;
 His vow, he said, should well be kept,
 Ere in the sea the sun was dipp'd—
 Then, conscious, glanced upon his queen:
 But she, unruffled at the scene
 Of human frailty, construed mild,
 Look'd upon Lancelot and smiled.

XVI.

"'Up! up! each knight of gallant crest;
 Take buckler, spear, and brand!
 He that to-day shall bear him best,
 Shall win my Gyneth's hand.
 And Arthur's daughter, when a bride,
 Shall bring a noble dower;
 Both fair Strath-Clyde and Reged wide,
 And Carlisle town and tower.'—
 Then might you hear each valiant knight,
 To page and squire that cried,
 'Bring my armor bright, and my courser wight!
 'Tis not each day that a warrior's might
 May win a royal bride.'—
 Then cloaks and caps of maintenance
 In haste aside they fling;
 The helmets glance, and gleams the lance,
 And the steel-weaved hauberks ring.

Small care had they of their peaceful array,
They might gather it that wolde;
For brake and bramble glittered gay,
With pearls and cloth of gold.

XVII.

“Within trumpet-sound of the Table Round
Were fifty champions free;
And they all arise to fight that prize,—
They all arise but three.
Nor love’s fond troth, nor wedlock’s oath,
One gallant could withhold,
For priests will allow of a broken vow,
For penance or for gold.
But sigh and glance from ladies bright
Among the troop were thrown,
To plead their right, and true-love plight,
And plain of honor flown.
The knights they busied them so fast,
With buckling spur and belt,
That sigh and look, by ladies cast,
Were neither seen nor felt.
From pleading, or upbraiding glance,
Each gallant turns aside,
And only thought, ‘If speeds my lance,
A queen becomes my bride!
She has fair Strath-Clyde, and Reged wide,
And Carlisle tower and town;
She is the loveliest maid, beside,
That ever heir’d a crown.’—
So in haste their coursers they bestride,
And strike their vizors down.

XVIII.

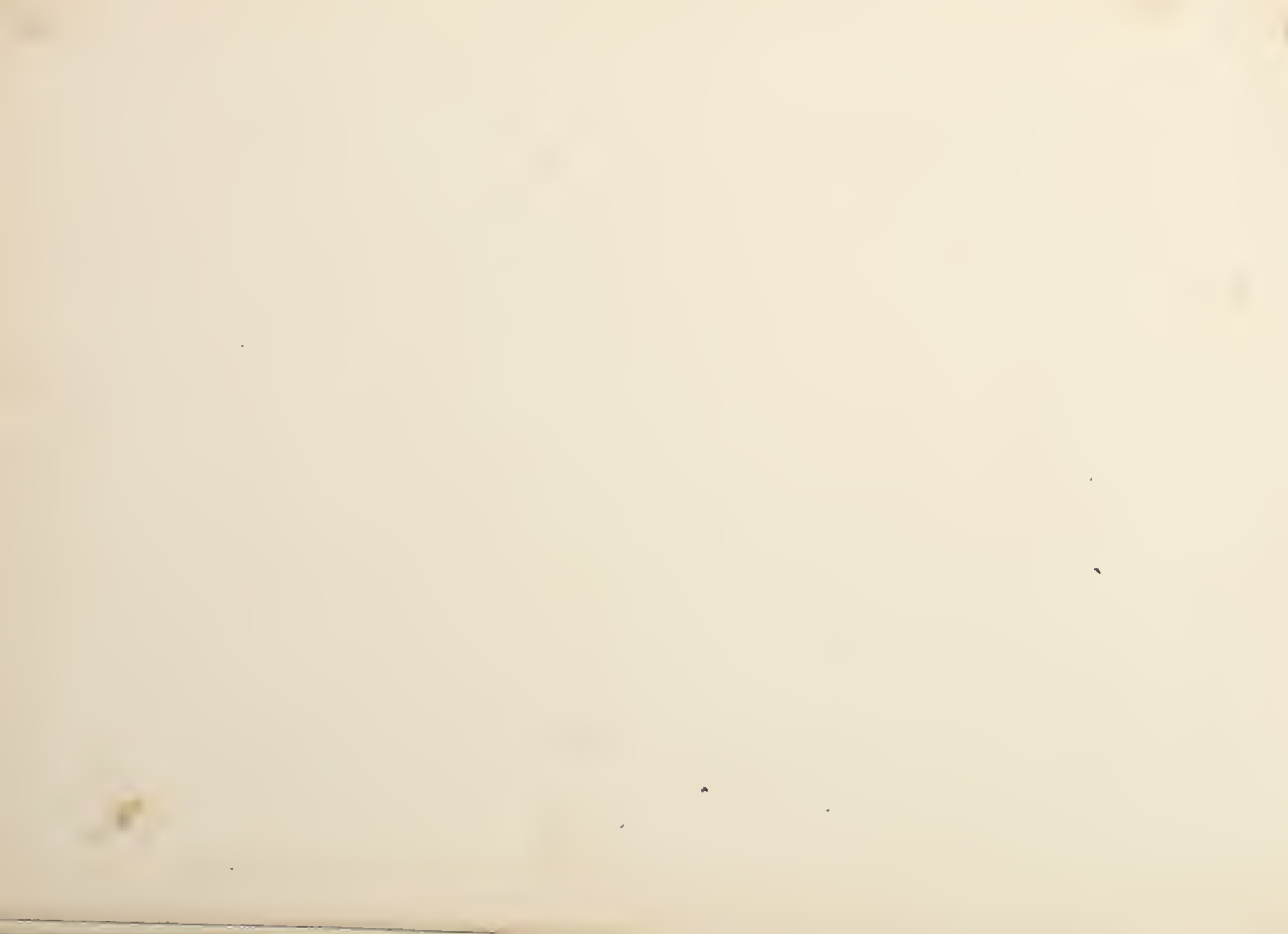
“The champions, arm’d in martial sort,
Have throng’d into the list,
And but three knights of Arthur’s court
Are from the tourney miss’d.
And still these lovers’ fame survives
For faith so constant shown,—
There were two who loved their neighbors’ wives,
And one who loved his own.
The first was Lancelot de Lac,
The second Tristrem bold,
The third was valiant Carodac,
Who won the cup of gold,
What time, of all King Arthur’s crew
(Thereof came jeer and laugh),
He, as the mate of lady true,
Alone the cup could quaff.
Though envy’s tongue would fain surmise
That, but for very shame,
Sir Carodac, to fight that prize,
Had given both cup and dame;
Yet, since but one of that fair court
Was true to wedlock’s shrine,
Brand him who will with base report,—
He shall be free from mine.

XIX.

“Now caracol’d the steeds in air,
Now plumes and pennons wanton’d fair,
As all around the lists so wide
In panoply the champions ride.



PLATE VII.



King Arthur saw, with startled eye,
 The flower of chivalry march by,
 The bulwark of the Christian creed,
 The kingdom's shield in hour of need.
 Too late he thought him of the woe
 Might from the civil conflict flow;
 For well he knew they would not part
 Till cold was many a gallant heart.
 His hasty vow he 'gan to rue,
 And Gyneth then apart he drew;
 To her his leading-staff resign'd,
 But added caution grave and kind.

XX.

“Thou seest, my child, as promise-bound
 I bid the trump for tourney sound.
 Take thou my warder, as the queen
 And umpire of the martial scene;
 But mark thou this:— as Beauty bright
 Is polar star to valiant knight,
 As at her word his sword he draws,
 His fairest guerdon her applause,
 So gentle maid should never ask
 Of knighthood vain and dangerous task;
 And Beauty's eye should ever be
 Like the twin stars that soothe the sea.
 And Beauty's breath should whisper peace,
 And bid the storm of battle cease.
 I tell thee this, lest all too far
 These knights urge tourney into war.

Blithe at the trumpet let them go,
 And fairly counter blow for blow;—
 No striplings these, who succor need
 For a razed helm or falling steed.
 But, Gyneth, when the strife grows warm,
 And threatens death or deadly harm,
 Thy sire entreats, thy King commands,
 Thou drop the warder from thy hands.
 Trust thou thy father with thy fate,
 Doubt not he choose thee fitting mate;
 Nor be it said, through Gyneth's pride
 A rose of Arthur's chaplet died.'—

XXI.

“A proud and discontented glow
 O'ershadow'd Gyneth's brow of snow:
 She put the warder by:—
 ‘Reserve thy boon, my liege,’ she said,
 ‘Thus chaffered down and limited,
 Debased and narrow'd, for a maid
 Of less degree than I.
 No petty chief but holds his heir
 At a more honor'd price and rare
 Than Britain's King holds me!
 Although the sun-burn'd maid, for dower,
 Has but her father's rugged tower,
 His barren hill and lea.’
 King Arthur swore: ‘By crown and sword,
 As belted knight and Britain's lord,
 That a whole summer's day should strive
 His knights, the bravest knights alive!’

'Recall thine oath! and to her glen
 Poor Gyneth can return agen;
 Not on thy daughter will the stain,
 That soils thy sword and crown, remain.
 But think not she will e'er be bride
 Save to the bravest, proved and tried;
 Pendragon's daughter will not fear
 For clashing sword or splintered spear,
 Nor shrink though blood should flow;
 And all too well sad Guendolen
 Hath taught the faithlessness of men,
 That child of hers should pity, when
 Their meed they undergo.'—

XXII.

"He frowned and sighed, the Monarch bold:—
 'I give, what I may not withhold;
 For, not for danger, dread, nor death,
 Must British Arthur break his faith.
 Too late I mark, thy mother's art
 Hath taught thee this relentless part.
 I blame her not, for she had wrong;
 But not to these my faults belong.
 Use, then, the warder as thou wilt;
 But trust me, that, if life be spilt,
 In Arthur's love, in Arthur's grace,
 Gyneth shall lose a daughter's place.'
 With that he turn'd his head aside,
 Nor brook'd to gaze upon her pride,

As, with the truncheon raised, she sate
 The arbitress of mortal fate;
 Nor brooked to mark, in ranks disposed,
 How the bold champions stood opposed,
 For shrill the trumpet-flourish fell
 Upon his ear like passing bell!
 Then first from sight of martial fray
 Did Britain's champion turn away.

XXIII.

"But Gyneth heard the clangor high,
 As hears the hawk the partridge cry.
 Oh, blame her not! the blood was hers,
 That at the trumpet's summons stirs!
 And e'en the gentlest female eye
 Might the brave strife of chivalry
 A while untroubled view;
 So well accomplish'd was each knight,
 To strike, and to defend in fight,
 Their meeting was a goodly sight,
 While plate and mail held true.
 The lists with painted plumes were strown,
 Upon the wind at random thrown,
 But helm and breastplate bloodless shone;
 It seem'd their feather'd crests alone
 Should this encounter rue.
 And ever, as the combat grows,
 The trumpet's cheery voice arose;
 Like lark's shrill song the flourish flows,
 Heard while the gale of April blows
 The merry greenwood through.



PLATE VII.



XXIV.

" But soon to earnest grew their game,
 The spears drew blood, the swords struck flame.
 And, horse and man, to ground there came
 Knights, who shall rise no more!
 Gone was the pride the war that graced,
 Gay shields were cleft and crests defaced,
 And steel coats riven, and helms unbraced,
 And pennons stream'd with gore.
 Gone, too, were fence and fair array,
 And desperate strength made deadly way
 At random through the bloody fray,
 And blows were dealt with headlong sway,
 Unheeding where they fell;
 And now the trumpet's clamors seem
 Like the shrill sea-bird's wailing scream,
 Heard o'er the whirlpool's gulping stream,
 The sinking seamen's knell!

XXV.

" Seem'd in this dismal hour, that Fate
 Would Camlan's ruin antedate,
 And spare dark Mordred's crime:
 Already gasping on the ground,
 Lie twenty of the Table Round,
 Of chivalry the prime.
 Arthur, in anguish, tore away
 From head and beard his tresses gray,
 And she, proud Gyneth, felt dismay,
 And quaked with ruth and fear;

But still she deem'd her mother's shade
 Hung o'er the tumult, and forbade
 The sign that had the slaughter stay'd,
 And chid the rising tear.
 The Brunor, Taulas, Mador fell,
 Helias the White, and Lionel,
 And many a champion more;
 Rochemont and Dinadam are down,
 And Ferrand of the Forest Brown
 Lies gasping in his gore.
 Vanoc by mighty Morolt press'd,
 Even to the confines of the list,
 Young Vanoc of the beardless face
 (Fame spoke the youth of Merlin's race),
 O'erpower'd at Gyneth's footstool bled,
 His heart's blood dyed her sandals red.
 But then the sky was overcast,
 Then howl'd at once a whirlwind's blast,
 And, rent by sudden throes,
 Yawn'd in mid lists the quaking earth,
 And from the gulf, tremendous birth!—
 The form of Merlin rose.

XXVI.

" Sternly the wizard prophet eyed
 The dreary lists with slaughter dyed,
 And sternly raised his hand:—
 ' Madmen!' he said, ' your strife forbear!
 And thou, fair cause of mischief, hear
 The doom thy fates demand!

Long shall close in stony sleep
 Eyes for ruth that would not weep;
 Iron lethargy shall seal
 Heart that pity scorn'd to feel.
 Yet, because thy mother's art
 Warp'd thine unsuspecting heart,
 And for love of Arthur's race,
 Punishment is blent with grace.
 Thou shalt bear thy penance lone,
 In the Valley of Saint John,
 And this weird shall overtake thee;—
 Sleep, until a knight shall wake thee,
 For feats of arms as far renown'd
 As warrior of the Table Round.
 Long endurance of thy slumber
 Well may teach the world to number
 All their woes from Gyneth's pride,
 When the Red Cross champions died.'—

XXVII.

"As Merlin speaks, on Gyneth's eye
 Slumber's load begins to lie;
 Fear and Anger vainly strive
 Still to keep its light alive.
 Twice, with effort and with pause,
 O'er her brow her hand she draws;
 Twice her strength in vain she tries,
 From the fatal chair to rise;
 Merlin's magic doom is spoken,
 Vanoc's death must now be wroken.
 Slow the dark-fringed eyelids fall,
 Curtaining each azure ball,

Slowly as on summer eves
 Violets fold their dusky leaves.
 The weighty baton of command
 Now bears down her sinking hand,
 On her shoulder droops her head;
 Net of pearl and golden thread,
 Bursting, gave her locks to flow
 O'er her arm and breast of snow.
 And so lovely seem'd she there,
 Spell-bound in her ivory chair,
 That her angry sire, repenting,
 Craved stern Merlin for relenting,
 And the champions, for her sake,
 Would again the contest wake;
 Till, in necromantic night,
 Gyneth vanish'd from their sight.

XXVIII.

"Still she bears her weird alone,
 In the Valley of Saint John;
 And her semblance oft will seem,
 Mingling in a champion's dream,
 Of her weary lot to plain,
 And crave his aid to burst her chain.
 While her wondrous tale was new,
 Warriors to her rescue drew,
 East and west, and south and north,
 From the Liffy, Thames, and Forth.
 Most have sought in vain the glen,
 Tower nor castle could they ken;
 Not at every time or tide,
 Nor by every eye descried.

Fast and vigil must be borne,
Many a night in watching worn,
Ere an eye of mortal powers
Can discern those magic towers.
Of the persevering few,
Some from hopeless task withdrew,
When they read the dismal threat
Graved upon the gloomy gate.
Few have braved the yawning door,
And those few return'd no more.
In the lapse of time forgot,
Well nigh lost is Gyneth's lot;
Sound her sleep as in the tomb,
Till waken'd by the trump of doom."

END OF LYULPH'S TALE.

Canto Third.

I

BEWCASTLE now must keep the Hold,
Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall,
Of Hartley-burn the bowmen bold
Must only shoot from battled wall;
And Liddesdale may buckle spur,
And Teviot now may belt the brand,
Tarras and Ewes keep nightly stir,
And Eskdale foray Cumberland.
Of wasted fields and plunder'd flocks
The Borderers bootless may complain;

They lack the sword of brave De Vaux,
There comes no aid from Triermain.
That lord, on high adventure bound,
Hath wander'd forth alone,
And day and night keeps watchful round
In the Valley of Saint John.

II.

When first began his vigil bold,
The moon twelve summer nights was old,
And shone both fair and full;
High in the vault of cloudless blue,
O'er streamlet, dale, and rock, she threw
Her light composed and cool.
Stretch'd on the brown hill's heathy breast,
Sir Roland eyed the vale;
Chief where, distinguish'd from the rest,
Those clustering rocks uprear'd their crest,
The dwelling of the Fair distress'd,
As told gray Lyulph's tale.
Thus as he lay, the lamp of night
Was quivering on his armor bright,
In beams that rose and fell,
And danced upon his buckler's boss,
That lay beside him on the moss,
As on a crystal well.

III.

Ever he watch'd, and oft he deem'd,
While on the mound the moonlight stream'd,
It alter'd to his eyes;

Fain would he hope the rocks 'gan change
To buttress'd walls their shapeless range,
Fain think, by transmutation strange,

He saw gray turrets rise.

But scarce his heart with hope throbb'd high,
Before the wild illusions fly,

Which fancy had conceived,
Abetted by an anxious eye

That long'd to be deceived.

It was a fond deception all,
Such as, in solitary hall,

Beguiles the musing eye,
When, gazing on the sinking fire,
Bulwark, and battlement, and spire,

In the red gulf we spy,
For, seen by moon of middle night,
Or by the blaze of noontide bright,
Or by the dawn of morning light,
Or evening's western flame,

In every tide, at every hour,
In mist, in sunshine, and in shower,
The rocks remain'd the same.

IV.

Oft has he traced the charmed mound,
Oft climb'd its crest, or paced it round,
Yet nothing might explore,
Save that the crags so rudely piled,
At distance seen, resemblance wild
To a rough fortress bore.

Yet still his watch the Warrior keeps,
Feeds hard and spare, and seldom sleeps,
And drinks but of the well ;
Ever by day he walks the hill,
And when the evening gale is chill,
He seeks a rocky cell,
Like hermit poor to bid his bead,
And tell his Ave and his Creed,
Invoking every Saint at need,
For aid to burst his spell.

V.

And now the moon her orb has hid,
And dwindled to a silver thread,
Dim seen in middle heaven ;
While o'er its curve careering fast,
Before the fury of the blast
The midnight clouds are driven.
The brooklet raved, for on the hills,
The upland showers had swoln the rills,
And down the torrents came ;
Mutter'd the distant thunder dread,
And frequent o'er the vale was spread
A sheet of lightning flame.
De Vaux, within his mountain cave
(No human step the storm durst brave),
To moody meditation gave
Each faculty of soul,
Till, lull'd by distant torrent sound,
And the sad winds that whistled round,
Upon his thoughts, in musing drown'd,
A broken slumber stole.

VI.

'Twas then was heard a heavy sound
 (Sound, strange and fearful there to hear,
 'Mongst desert hills, where, leagues around,
 Dwelt but the gorcock and the deer) :
 As, starting from his couch of fern,
 Again he heard, in clangor stern,
 That deep and solemn swell ; —
 Twelve times, in measured tone, it spoke,
 Like some proud minster's pealing clock,
 Or city's 'larum bell.
 What thought was Roland's, first when fell,
 In that deep wilderness, the knell
 Upon his startled ear? —
 To slander warrior were I loath,
 Yet must I hold my minstrel troth, —
 It was a thought of fear.

VII.

But lively was the mingled thrill
 That chased that momentary chill,
 For Love's keen wish was there,
 And eager Hope, and Valor high,
 And the proud glow of Chivalry,
 That burn'd to do and dare.
 Forth from the cave the Warrior rush'd,
 Long ere the mountain-voice was hush'd,
 That answer'd to the knell ;
 For long and far the unwonted sound,
 Eddying in echoes round and round,
 Was tossed from fell to fell ;

And Glaramara answer thng,
 And Grisdale-pike responsive rung,
 And Legbert heights their echoes swung,
 As far as Derwent's dell.

VIII.

Forth upon trackless darkness gazed
 The Knight, bedeafoened and amazed,
 Till all was hushed and still,
 Save the swoln torrent's sullen roar,
 And the night-blast that wildly bore
 Its course along the hill.
 Then on the northern sky there came
 A light, as of reflected flame,
 And over Legbert-head,
 As if by magic art controlled,
 A mighty meteor slowly rolled
 Its orb of fiery red ;
 Thou wouldst have thought some demon dire
 Came mounted on that car of fire,
 To do his errand dread.
 Far on the sloping valley's course,
 On thicket, rock, and torrent hoarse,
 Shingle and Scrae, and Fell and Force,
 A dusky light arose :
 Displayed, yet altered, was the scene,
 Dark rock, and brook of silver sheen,
 Even the gay thicket's summer green,
 In bloody tincture glows.

IX.

De Vaux had marked the sunbeams set,
 At eve, upon the coronet

Of that enchanted mound,
 And seen but crags at random flung,
 That, o'er the brawling torrent hung,
 In desolation frowned.
 What sees he by that meteor's lour? —
 A bannered Castle, Keep, and Tower,
 Return the lurid gleam;
 With battled walls and buttress fast,
 And barbican and ballium vast,
 And airy flanking towers that cast
 Their shadows on the stream.
 'Tis no deceit! distinctly clear
 Crenell and parapet appear,
 While o'er the pile that meteor drear
 Makes momentary pause;
 Then forth its solemn path it drew,
 And fainter yet and fainter grew
 Those gloomy towers upon the view,
 As its wild light withdraws.

X.

Forth from the cave did Roland rush,
 O'er crag and stream, through brier and bush;
 Yet far he had not sped,
 Ere sunk was that portentous light
 Behind the hills, and utter night
 Was on the valley spread.
 He paused perforce, — and blew his horn,
 And on the mountain-echoes borne
 Was heard an answering sound,

A wild and lonely trumpet-note —
 In middle air it seemed to float
 High o'er the battled mound;
 And sounds were heard, as when a guard
 Of some proud castle, holding ward,
 Pace forth their nightly round.
 The valiant Knight of Triermain
 Rung forth his challenge-blast again,
 But answer came there none;
 And 'mid the mingled wind and rain,
 Darkling he sought the vale in vain,
 Until the dawning shone;
 And when it dawned, that wondrous sight,
 Distinctly seen by meteor light,
 It all had passed away!
 And that enchanted mound once more
 A pile of granite fragments bore,
 As at the close of day.

XI.

Steeled for the deed, De Vaux's heart
 Scorned from his venturous quest to part
 He walks the vale once more;
 But only sees, by night or day,
 That shattered pile of rocks so gray,
 Hears but the torrent's roar.
 Till when, through hills of azure borne,
 The moon renewed her silver horn,
 Just at the time her waning ray
 Had faded in the dawning day,
 A summer mist arose;



Eric Meyers
1910

Adown the vale the vapors float,
And cloudy undulations moat
That tufted mound of mystic note,
 As round its base they close.
And higher now the fleecy tide
Ascends its stern and shaggy side,
Until the airy billows hide
 The rock's majestic isle:
It seemed a veil of filmy lawn,
By some fantastic fairy drawn
 Around enchanted pile.

XII.

The breeze came softly down the brook,
 And, sighing as it blew,
The veil of silver mist it shook,
And to De Vaux's eager look
 Renewed that wondrous view.
For, though the loitering vapor braved
The gentle breeze, yet oft it waved
 Its mantle's dewy fold;
And still, when shook that filmy screen,
Were towers and bastions dimly seen,
And Gothic battlements between
 Their gloomy length unrolled.
Speed, speed, De Vaux, ere on thine eye
Once more the fleeting vision die!—
 The gallant Knight can speed
As prompt and light as, when the hound
Is opening, and the horn is wound,
 Careers the hunter's steed.

Down the steep dell his course amain
 Hath rivalled archer's shaft;
But ere the mound he could attain,
The rocks their shapeless form regain,
And, mocking loud his labor vain,
 The mountain spirits laughed;
Far up the echoing dell was borne
Their wild unearthly shout of scorn.

XIII.

Wroth wax'd the Warrior.— "Am I then
Fooled by the enemies of men,
Like a poor hind, whose homeward way
Is haunted by malicious fay?
Is Triermain become your taunt,
De Vaux your scorn? False fiends, avaunt!"
A weighty curtal-axe he bare;
The baleful blade so bright and square,
And the tough shaft of heben wood,
Were oft in Scottish gore imbrued.
Backward his stately form he drew,
And at the rocks the weapon threw,
Just where one crag's projected crest
Hung proudly balanced o'er the rest.
Hurled with main force, the weapon's shock
Rent a huge fragment of the rock,
If by mere strength, 'twere hard to tell,
Or if the blow dissolved some spell,
But down the headlong ruin came,
With cloud of dust and flash of flame,
Down bank, o'er bush, its course was borne,
Crushed lay the copse, the earth was torn,

Till, stayed at length, the ruin dread
Cumbered the torrent's rocky bed,
And bade the water's high-swoln tide
Seek other passage for its pride.

XIV.

When ceased that thunder, Triermain
Surveyed the mount's rude front again ;
And lo! the ruin had laid bare,
Hewn in the stone, a winding stair,
Whose mossed and fractured steps might lend
The means the summit to ascend,
And by whose aid the brave De Vaux
Began to scale these magic rocks,
 And soon a platform won,
Where, the wild witchery to close,
Within three lances' length arose
 The Castle of Saint John!
No misty phantom of the air,
No meteor-blazoned show was there ;
In morning splendor, full and fair,
 The massive fortress shone.

XV.

Embattled high and proudly tower'd,
Shaded by ponderous flankers, lower'd
 The portal's gloomy way.
Though for six hundred years and more,
Its strength had brooked the tempest's roar,
The scutcheoned emblems which it bore
 Had suffered no decay ;
But from the eastern battlement

A turret had made sheer descent,
And, down in recent ruin rent,
 In the mid torrent lay.
Else, o'er the Castle's brow sublime,
Insults of violence or of time
 Unfelt had passed away.
In shapeless characters of yore,
The gate this stern inscription bore : —

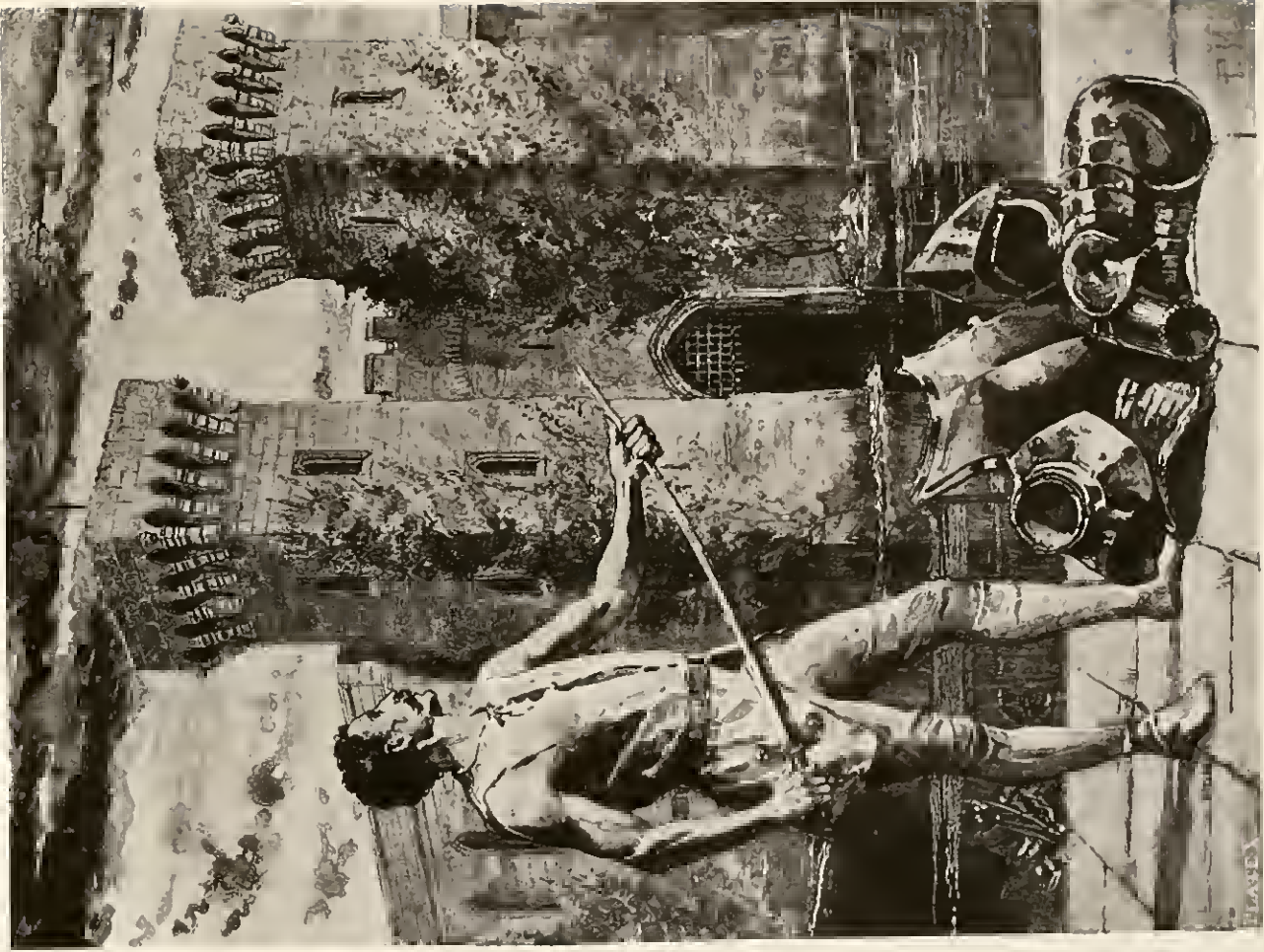
XVI.

Inscription.

“ Patience waits the destined day,
Strength can clear the cumbered way.
Warrior, who hast waited long,
Firm of soul, of sinew strong,
It is given to thee to gaze
On the pile of ancient days.
Never mortal builder's hand
This enduring fabric planned ;
Sign and sigil, word of power,
From the earth raised keep and tower.
View it o'er, and pace it round,
Rampart, turret, battled-mound ;
Dare no more! To cross the gate
Were to tamper with thy fate ;
Strength and fortitude were vain,
View it o'er— and turn again.” —

XVII.

“ That would I,” said the Warrior bold,
“ If that my frame were bent and old,





And my thin blood dropped slow and cold
As icicle in thaw ;
But while my heart can feel it dance,
Blithe as the sparkling wine of France,
And this good arm wields sword or lance,
I mock these words of awe ! ”
He said ; the wicket felt the sway
Of his strong hand, and straight gave way,
And, with rude crash and jarring bray,
The rusty bolts withdraw ;
But o'er the threshold as he strode,
And forward took the vaulted road,
An unseen arm, with force amain,
The ponderous gate flung close again,
And rusted bolt and bar
Spontaneous took their place once more,
While the deep arch with sullen roar
Returned their surly jar.
“ Now closed is the gin and the prey within,
By the Rood of Lanercost !
But he that would win the war-wolf's skin,
May rue him of his boast. ” —
Thus muttering, on the Warrior went,
By dubious light down steep descent.

XVIII.

Unbarred, unlocked, unwatched, a port
Led to the Castle's outer court ;
There the main fortress, broad and tall,
Spread its long range of bower and hall,
And towers of varied size,

Wrought with each ornament extreme,
That Gothic art, in wildest dream
Of fancy, could devise.
But full between the Warrior's way
And the main portal arch, there lay
An inner moat ;
Nor bridge nor boat
Affords De Vaux the means to cross
The clear, profound, and silent fosse.
His arms aside in haste he flings,
Cuirass of steel and hauberk rings,
And down falls helm, and down the shield,
Rough with the dints of many a field.
Fair was his manly form, and fair
His keen dark eye, and close curled hair.
When, — all unarmed, save that the brand
Of well-proved metal graced his hand,
With nought to fence his dauntless breast
But the close gipon's under-vest,
Whose sullied buff the sable stains
Of hauberk and of mail retains. —
Roland De Vaux upon the brim
Of the broad moat stood prompt to swim.

XIX.

Accoutred thus he dared the tide,
And soon he reached the farther side,
And entered soon the Hold,
And paced a hall, whose walls so wide
Were blazoned all with feats of pride,
By warriors done of old.

In middle lists they countered here,
While trumpets seemed to blow ;
And there, in den or desert drear,
They quelled gigantic foe,
Braved the fierce griffon in his ire,
Or faced the dragon's breath of fire.
Strange in their arms, and strange in face,
Heroes they seemed of ancient race,
Whose deeds of arms, and race, and name,
Forgotten long by later fame,
Were here depicted to appal
Those of an age degenerate,
Whose bold intrusion braved their fate
In this enchanted hall.
For some short space, the venturous Knight
With these high marvels fed his sight ;
Then sought the chamber's upper end,
Where three broad easy steps ascend
To an arched portal door,
In whose broad folding leaves of state
Was framed a wicket window-grate,
And ere he ventured more,
The gallant Knight took earnest view
The grated wicket-window through.

XX.

Oh for his arms ! Of martial weed
Had never mortal knight such need !
He spied a stately gallery ; all
Of snow-white marble was the wall,
The vaulting, and the floor ;

And, contrast strange ! on either hand
There stood arrayed in sable band,
Four Maids whom Afric bore ;
And each a Libyan tiger led,
Held by as bright and frail a thread
As Lucy's golden hair,
For the leash that bound these monsters dread
Was but of gossamer.
Each Maiden's short barbaric vest
Left all unclosed the knee and breast,
And limbs of shapely jet ;
White was their vest and turban's fold,
On arms and ankles rings of gold
In savage pomp were set ;
A quiver on their shoulders lay,
And in their hand an assagay.
Such and so silent stood they there,
That Roland well-nigh hoped
He saw a band of statues rare,
Stationed the gazer's soul to scare ;
But, when the wicket oped,
Each grisly beast 'gan upward draw,
Rolled his grim eye, and spread his claw,
Scented the air, and licked his jaw ;
While these weird Maids, in Moorish tongue,
A wild and dismal warning sung : —

XXI.

"Rash Adventurer, bear thee back !
Dread the spell of Dahomay !
Fear the race of Zaharak,
Daughters of the burning day !



“When the whirlwind’s gusts are wheeling,
Ours it is the dance to braid;
Zarah’s sands in pillars reeling,
Join the measures that we tread;
When the Moon has donned her cloak,
And the stars are red to see,
Shrill when pipes the sad Siroc,
Music meet for such as we.

“Where the shattered columns lie,
Showing Carthage once had been,
If the wandering Santon’s eye
Our mysterious rites hath seen, —
Oft he cons the prayer of death,
To the nations preaches doom,
‘Azrael’s brand hath left the sheath,
Moslems, think upon the tomb!’ —

“Ours the scorpion, ours the snake,
Ours the hydra of the fen,
Ours the tiger of the brake,
All that plagues the sons of men.
Ours the tempest’s midnight wrack,
Pestilence that wastes by day —
Dread the race of Zaharak!
Fear the spell of Dahomay!”

XXII.

Uncouth and strange the accents shrill
Rung those vaulted roofs among,
Long it was ere, faint and still,
Died the far-resounded song.

While yet the distant echoes roll,
The Warrior communed with his soul: —
“When first I took this venturous quest,
I swore upon the rood,
Neither to stop, nor turn, nor rest,
For evil or for good.
My forward path, too well I ween,
Lies yonder fearful ranks between;
For man unarmed, ’tis bootless hope
With tigers and with fiends to cope —
Yet, if I turn, what waits me there,
Save famine dire and fell despair? —
Other conclusion let me try,
Since, choose howe’er I list, I die,
Forward, lies faith and knightly fame;
Behind, are perjury and shame.
In life or death, I hold my word!” —
With that he drew his trusty sword,
Caught down a banner from the wall,
And entered thus the fearful hall.

XXIII.

On high each wayward Maiden threw
Her swarthy arm, with wild halloo!
On either side a tiger sprung —
Against the leftward foe he flung
The ready banner, to engage
With tangling folds the brutal rage;
The right-hand monster in mid-air
He struck so fiercely and so fair,
Through gullet and through spinal bone
The trenchant blade had sheerly gone.

His grisly brethren ramped and yelled,
 But the slight leash their rage withheld,
 Whilst, 'twixt their ranks, the dangerous road
 Firmly, though swift, the champion strode.
 Safe to the gallery's bound he drew,
 Safe passed an open portal through;
 And when against pursuit he flung
 The gate, judge if the echoes rung!
 Onward his daring course he bore,
 While, mixed with dying growl and roar,
 Wild jubilee and loud hurra
 Pursued him on his venturous way.

XXIV.

" Hurra, hurra! Our watch is done!
 We hail once more the tropic sun.
 Pallid beams of northern day,
 Farewell, farewell! Hurra, hurra!

" Five hundred years o'er this cold glen
 Hath the pale sun come round agen;
 Foot of man, till now, hath ne'er
 Dared to cross the Hall of Fear.

" Warrior! thou, whose dauntless heart
 Gives us from our ward to part,
 Be as strong in future trial,
 Where resistance is denial.

" Now for Afric's glowing sky,
 Zwenga wide and Atlas high,
 Zaharak and Dahomay! —
 Mount the winds! Hurra, hurra!" —

XXV.

The wizard song at distance died,
 As if in ether borne astray,
 While through waste halls and chambers wide
 The Knight pursued his steady way,
 Till to a lofty dome he came,
 That flashed with such a brilliant flame,
 As if the wealth of all the world
 Were there in rich confusion hurled.
 For here the gold, in sandy heaps,
 With duller earth incorporate, sleeps;
 Was there in ingots piled, and there
 Coined badge of empery it bare;
 Yonder, huge bars of silver lay,
 Dimmed by the diamond's neighboring ray,
 Like the pale moon in morning day;
 And in the midst four Maidens stand,
 The daughters of some distant land.
 Their hue was of the dark-red dye,
 That fringes oft a thunder sky;
 Their hands palmetto baskets bare,
 And cotton fillets bound their hair;
 Slim was their form, their mien was shy,
 To earth they bent the humbled eye,
 Folded their arms, and suppliant kneeled,
 And thus their proffered gifts revealed: —

XXVI.

CHORUS.

" See the treasures Merlin piled,
 Portion meet for Arthur's child.
 Bathe in Wealth's unbounded stream,
 Wealth that Avarice ne'er could dream!"



PLATE XL



FIRST MAIDEN.

" See these clots of virgin gold !
Severed from the sparry mould,
Nature's mystic alchemy
In the mine thus bade them lie ;
And their orient smile can win
Kings to stoop, and saints to sin." —

SECOND MAIDEN.

" See these pearls, that long have slept,
These were tears by Naiads wept
For the loss of Marinel :
Tritons in the silver shell
Treasured them, till hard and white
As the teeth of Amphitrite." —

THIRD MAIDEN.

" Does a livelier hue delight ?
Here are rubies blazing bright,
Here the emerald's fairy green,
And the topaz glows between ;
Here their varied hues unite,
In the changeful chrysolite." —

FOURTH MAIDEN.

" Leave these gems of poorer shine,
Leave them all, and look on mine ;
While their glories I expand,
Shade thine eyebrows with thy hand.
Mid-day sun and diamond's blaze
Blind the rash beholder's gaze." —

CHORUS.

" Warrior, seize the splendid store ;
Would 'twere all our mountains bore !
We should ne'er in future story,
Read, Peru, thy perished glory!" —

XXVII.

Calmly and unconcerned the Knight
Waved aside the treasures bright :
" Gentle Maidens, rise, I pray !
Bar not thus my destined way.
Let these boasted brilliant toys
Braid the hair of girls and boys !
Bid your streams of gold expand
O'er proud London's thirsty land.
De Vaux of wealth saw never need,
Save to purvey him arms and steed,
And all the ore he deigned to hoard
Inlays his helm, and hilts his sword." —
Thus gently parting from their hold,
He left, unmoved, the dome of gold.

XXVIII.

And now the morning sun was high,
De Vaux was weary, faint, and dry ;
When lo ! a plashing sound he hears,
A gladsome signal that he nears
Some frolic water-run ;
And soon he reached a court-yard square,
Where dancing in the sultry air,
Tossed high aloft, a fountain fair
Was sparkling in the sun.

On right and left, a fair arcade
In long perspective view displayed
Alleys and bowers, for sun or shade ;
 But, full in front, a door,
Low-browed and dark, seemed as it led
To the lone dwelling of the dead,
 Whose memory was no more.

XXIX.

Here stopped De Vaux an instant's space,
To bathe his parched lips and face,
 And marked with well-pleased eye,
Refracted on the fountain stream,
In rainbow hues, the dazzling beam
 Of that gay summer sky.
His senses felt a mild control,
Like that which lulls the weary soul,
 From contemplation high
Relaxing, when the ear receives
The music that the greenwood leaves
 Make to the breezes' sigh.

XXX.

And oft, in such a dreamy mood,
 The half-shut eye can frame
Fair apparitions in the wood,
As if the nymphs of field and flood
 In gay procession came.
Are these of such fantastic mould,
 Seen distant down the fair arcade,

These Maids enlinked in sister-fold,
Who, late at bashful distance stayed,
Now tripping from the greenwood shade,
 Nearer the musing champion draw,
And in a pause of seeming awe,
Again stand doubtful now? —
 Ah, that sly pause of witching powers!
That seems to say, "To please be ours,
 Be yours to tell us how." —

Their hue was of the golden glow
That suns of Candahar bestow,
O'er which in slight suffusion flows
A frequent tinge of paly rose ;
Their limbs were fashioned fair and free,
In Nature's justest symmetry,
And, wreathed with flowers, with odors graced,
Their raven ringlets reached the waist ;
In eastern pomp, its gilding pale,
The hennah lent each shapely nail,
And the dark sumah gave the eye
More liquid and more lustrous dye.
The spotless veil of misty lawn,
In studied disarrangement, drawn.
 The form and bosom o'er.

To win the eye — or tempt the touch,
For modesty showed all too much —
 Too much — yet promised more.

XXXI.

"Gentle Knight, a while delay,"
Thus they sung, "thy toilsome way,



PLATE XIII.



While we pay the duty due
To our Master and to you,
Over Avarice, over Fear,
Love triumphant led thee here ;
Warrior, list to us, for we
Are slaves to Love, are friends to thee.

“ Though no treasured gems have we
To proffer on the bended knee,
Though we boast nor arm nor heart
For the assagay or dart,
Swains allow each simple girl
Ruby lip and teeth of pearl :
Or, if dangers more you prize,
Flatterers find them in our eyes.

“ Stay, then, gentle Warrior, stay,
Rest till evening steal on day ;
Stay, oh, stay! — in yonder bowers
We will braid thy locks with flowers,
Spread the feast, and fill the wine,
Charm thy ear with sounds divine,
Weave our dances till delight
Yield to languor, day to night.

“ Then shall she you most approve
Sing the lays that best you love,
Soft thy mossy couch shall spread,
Watch thy pillow, prop thy head,
Till the weary night be o'er —
Gentle Warrior, wouldst thou more! —
Wouldst thou more, fair Warrior, — she
Is slave to Love and slave to thee.” —

XXXII.

Oh, do not hold it for a crime
In the bold hero of my rhyme,
For Stoic look,
And meet rebuke,
He lacked the heart or time !
As round the band of sirens trip,
He kissed one damsel's laughing lip,
And pressed another's proffered hand,
Spoke to them all in accents bland,
But broke their magic circle through ;
“ Kind Maids,” said he, “ adieu, adieu !
My fate, my fortune, forward lies.” —
He said, and vanished from their eyes ;
But, as he dared that darksome way,
Still heard behind their lovely lay :
“ Fair Flower of Courtesy, depart !
Go, where the feelings of the heart
With the warm pulse in concord move ;
Go, where Virtue sanctions love ! ”

XXXIII.

Downward De Vaux through darksome ways
And ruined vaults has gone,
Till issue from their wildered maze,
Or safe retreat, seemed none,
And e'en the dismal path he strays
Grew worse as he went on.
For cheérful sun, for living air,
Foul vapors rise and mine-fires glare
Whose fearful light the dangers showed
That dogged him on that dreadful road.

Deep pits, and lakes of waters dun,
They showed, but showed not how to shun.
These scenes of desolate despair,
These smothering clouds of poisoned air,
How gladly had De Vaux exchanged,
Though 'twere to face yon tigers ranged!

Nay, soothful bards have said,
So perilous his state seemed now,
He wished him under arbor bough
With Asia's willing maid.

When, joyful sound! at distance near
A trumpet flourished loud and clear,
And as it ceased, a lofty lay
Seemed thus to chide his lagging way:—

XXXIV.

"Son of Honor, theme of story,
Think on the reward before ye!
Danger, darkness, toil despise;
'Tis Ambition bids thee rise.

"He that would her heights ascend,
Many a weary step must wend,
Hand and foot and knee he tries:
Thus Ambition's minions rise.

"Lag not now, though rough the way,
Fortune's mood brooks no delay;
Grasp the boon that's spread before ye,
Monarch's power, and Conqueror's glory!"—

It ceased. Advancing on the sound,
A steep ascent the wanderer found,
And then a turret stair:

Nor climbed he far its steepy round
Till fresher blew the air,
And next a welcome glimpse was given,
That cheered him with the light of heaven.
At length his toil had won
A lofty hall with trophies dressed,
Where, as to greet imperial guest,
Four Maidens stood, whose crimson vest
Was bound with golden zone.

XXXV.

Of Europe seemed the damsels all;
The first a nymph of lively Gaul,
Whose easy step and laughing eye
Her borrowed air of awe belie;
The next a maid of Spain,
Dark-eyed, dark-haired, sedate, yet bold;
While ivory skin and tress of gold,
Her shy and bashful comrade told
For daughter of Almaïne.
These Maidens bore a royal robe,
With crown, with sceptre, and with globe,
Emblems of empery;
The fourth, a space behind them stood,
And leant upon a harp, in mood
Of minstrel ecstasy.
Of merry England she, in dress
Like ancient British Druidess;
Her hair an azure fillet bound,
Her graceful vesture swept the ground,
And, in her hand displayed,



PLATE XIV
1883



A crown did that fourth Maiden hold,
But unadorned with gems and gold,
Of glossy laurel made.

XXXVI.

At once to brave De Vaux knelt down
These foremost Maidens three,
And proffered sceptre, robe, and crown,
Liegedom and seignorie
O'er many a region wide and fair,
Destined, they said, for Arthur's heir ;
But homage would he none : —
" Rather," he said, " De Vaux would ride,
A Warden of the Border-side,
In plate and mail, than, robed in pride,
A monarch's empire own ;
Rather, far rather, would he be
A free-born Knight of England free,
Than sit on Despot's throne."
So passed he on, when that fourth Maid,
As starting from a trance,
Upon the harp her fingers laid ;
Her magic touch the chords obeyed,
Their soul awaked at once !

SONG OF THE FOURTH MAIDEN.

" Quake to your foundations deep,
Stately Towers, and bannered Keep !
Bid your vaulted echoes moan,
As the dreaded step they own.

" Fiends ! that wait on Merlin's spell,
Hear the foot-fall ! mark it well !
Spread your dusky wings abroad,
Boune ye for your homeward road !

" It is His, the first who e'er
Dared the Dismal Hall of Fear ;
His, who hath the snares defied
Spread by Pleasure, Wealth, and Pride.

" Quake to your foundations deep,
Bastion huge, and Turret steep !
Tremble, Keep, and totter, Tower !
This is Gyneth's waking hour." —

XXXVII.

Thus while she sung, the venturous Knight
Has reached a bower, where milder light
Through crimson curtains fell ;
Such softened shade the hill receives,
Her purple veil when twilight leaves
Upon its western swell,
That bower, the gazer to bewitch,
Had wondrous store of rare and rich
As e'er was seen with eye ;
For there by magic skill, I wis,
Form of each thing that living is
Was limned in proper dye.
All seemed to sleep — the timid hare
On form, the stag upon his lair,
The eagle in her eyrie fair
Between the earth and sky.

But what of pictured rich and rare
Could win De Vaux's eye-glance, where,
Deep slumbering in the fatal chair,

He saw King Arthur's child!
Doubt, and anger, and dismay,
From her brow had passed away,
Forgot was that fell tourney-day,

For, as she slept, she smiled.
It seemed that the repentant Seer
Her sleep of many a hundred year
With gentle dreams beguiled.

XXXVIII.

That form of maiden loveliness,
'Twixt childhood and 'twixt youth,
That ivory chair, that sylvan dress,
The arms and ankles bare, express
Of Lyulph's tale the truth.
Still upon her garment's hem
Vanoc's blood made purple gem,
And the warder of command
Cumbered still her sleeping hand;
Still her dark locks dishevelled flow
From net of pearl o'er breast of snow;
And so fair the slumberer seems,
That De Vaux impeached his dreams,
Vapid all and void of might,
Hiding half her charms from sight.
Motionless awhile he stands,
Folds his arms, and clasps his hands,
Trembling in his fitful joy,
Doubtful how he shall destroy
Long-enduring spell;

Doubtful too, when slowly rise
Dark-fringed lids of Gyneth's eyes,
What these eyes shall tell.

"St. George! St. Mary! can it be,
That they will kindly look on me!"—

XXXIX.

Gently, lo! the Warrior kneels,
Soft that lovely hand he steals,
Soft to kiss, and soft to clasp—
But the warder leaves her grasp;
Lightning flashes, rolls the thunder!

Gyneth startles from her sleep,
Totters tower, and trembles keep,
Burst the Castle walls asunder!
Fierce and frequent were the shocks,
Melt the magic halls away,—
— But beneath their mystic rocks,
In the arms of bold De Vaux,
Safe the Princess lay!
Safe and free from magic power,
Blushing like the rose's flower
Opening to the day;
And round the Champion's brows were bound
The crown that Druidess had wound,
Of the green laurel-bay.

And this was what remained of all
The wealth of each enchanted hall,
The Garland and the Dame:—
But where should Warrior seek the meed,
Due to high worth for daring deed,
Except from LOVE and FAME!



l
z
l
c
o
l
e
ot



